

Getting into Bed with The Devil? Exploring the Relationship between Community Music and Cultural Policy

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Biography:

Ryan Humphrey is a lecturer in Arts and Cultural Management at the University of Manchester, specialising in community arts, cultural policy and creative placemaking. Ryan holds a PhD in community music and cultural policy from York St John University. His research interests are community arts, cultural policy, cultural value, creative placemaking and funding mechanisms for arts and cultural activity. Before working in academia, Ryan worked as a community musician in North East England for several years.

Abstract

Given community music's activist and anti-institutional history, many community musicians still believe that their practices operate independently from cultural policymaking. However, there is a growing debate on how activist the field of community music is given its reliance on the institutionalised systems of funding and thereby policymaking it once opposed. This study explores the connection between community music and cultural policymaking by analysing the language and actions of community musicians. The research utilised a mixed methodological approach, incorporating critical discourse analysis, interdisciplinary literature review, and case studies of three music programmes. The results indicate that policymakers leverage community music to promote social objectives, leading to conflicts with the traditional values and activist spirit of community

musicians' work. As a result, the field of community music has become an institutionalised form of practice that embodies many of the values and practices it once opposed.

Introduction

Community music has traditionally been conceived as existing on the periphery of cultural policymaking (Currie, 2021). It emerged as a practice from the countercultural movements in the UK during the 1960s. These movements opposed the established structures surrounding arts and cultural activity, advocating for a fairer distribution of funding and resource to support arts and cultural activities that could benefit the many rather than a few (Jeffers & Moriarty, 2018). In essence, this movement challenged the traditional approach taken by governments and the Arts Council that emphasised funding and promotion of activities deemed to be of 'high' status and that marginalised those activities that fell outside of this remit. Instead, community musicians and artists aimed to promote a culturally democratic stance aiming to support all individuals to make, engage and celebrate their own arts and cultural heritage and interests.

Although this story of activism against institutionalised structures has become embedded within the narratives of community music, there has been growing scrutiny over whether the field of community music still holds this sense of activism, given its reliance on the institutionalised funding systems it once opposed. The likes of Kathryn Deane (2018), for instance, have described community music as becoming depoliticised through engaging with these funding systems. Meanwhile, Phil Mullen (2016) has even raised the question of whether community music has gotten into bed with the devil through working more collaboratively with funders and policymakers.

Nevertheless, although there is growing scrutiny, this idea that community music may be depoliticised has remained a taboo subject. This study aimed to begin to explore this idea through considering the relationship that has developed between community music and cultural policymaking and the effects

that this is having on the field practices and values. Guiding this research were the following questions:

Main Question:

Has community music gotten into the 'bed with the devil' by working within the frameworks of cultural policymaking?

Subsidiary Questions:

- 1) How is cultural policymaking affecting the practices of community musicians?
- 2) What is the role and value of community music within cultural policymaking in the 21st Century?
- 3) How might community musicians reclaim their sense of activism while still working within the institutionalised systems they find themselves within?

Research Design & Methods

To explore these questions, I employed a mixed methodological approach centred on examining the discourse of community music practice. My decision to focus on discourse was framed by Fairclough's (2001) and Gee's (2014) assertion that discourse is an embedded feature in society that is often influenced by broader social and political structures, such as policymaking. Thus, to understand the relationship between community music and cultural policy and thereby how policymaking affects the field of community music, it appeared vital to examine the field's discourse.

Gee (2014) writes that discourse is the interaction between language and action that gives meaning to society and influences how we see and make sense of the world around us. Fairclough (2001)

proposes that individuals must examine the language employed in specific contexts and situations to explore discourse critically. Thus, as part of this research, I decided to undertake a study into the language and practices of community musicians as a way of understanding the changing discourse. I identified three concepts that community music scholars have highlighted as being critical to the practices of community musicians: ownership, empowerment, and transformation (Krönig 2019; Gibson 2020). These three concepts have become almost colloquial to the practices of community musicians over the past several decades. Yet, there has been little examination of how these concepts have gained prominence or how they are used in practice. Thus, making them a clear choice in which to use to undertake examination. This was further strengthened through Mirza (2006) and Belfiore's (2011) acknowledgement of how terms such as transformation have become embedded rhetoric's within cultural policymaking.

My research design was inspired by Fairclough's (2001) and Gee's (2014) assertions about the connection between language, policy, and action (see Figure 1.1).

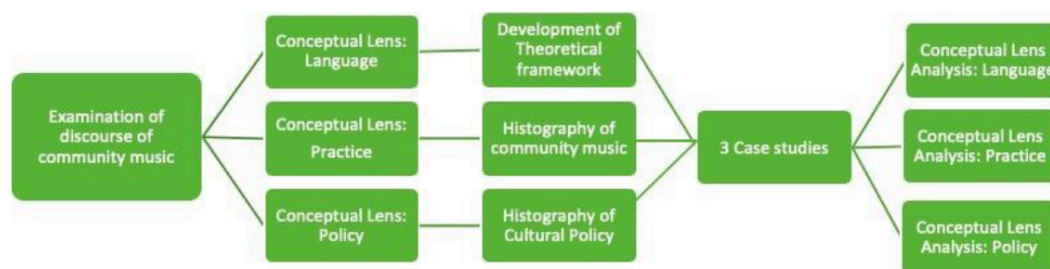


Figure 1.1- Research Design

My conceptual lens of practice aimed to undertake a critical discourse analysis on three public platforms seen as being critical to the field of community music:

- International Society for Music Education Community Music Activity Proceedings (ISME CMA)
- Sounding Board Journals (SBJ)
- International Journal of Community Music (IJCM)

I intended to trace how the employment of these three concepts had changed and developed and, in doing so, develop a historiography of community music in the UK. My conceptual lens of policy aimed to undertake an extensive literature review, including a policy analysis review, to develop a historiography of cultural policymaking in the UK. Finally, my conceptual lens of language aimed to undertake an interdisciplinary literature review of the theoretical ideas underpinning these three concepts and their use in different disciplines.

With these conceptual frameworks in place, I would undertake a case study strategy (Yin, 2003) on three community music programmes where I could begin to explore how the musicians were using these three concepts and why. The three cases involved were:

- **Music Spark**- A Youth Music funded programme working with young people aged 16-25 years of age with additional needs
- **The People's Music Collective (TPMC)**- An online National Lottery Funded programme working with adults living with a mental health diagnosis
- **Loud and Clear/More Stuff Like This Please (LAC/MSLTP)**—Youth Music and Arts Council England funded programme working with care-experienced children between ages 0 and 7 and their carers/adoptive parents.

Across each case study, I employed a range of methods, including participatory observations, focus groups and interviews with musicians, programme managers and music participants (See Table 1.1 for an outline of the sample of participants).

	Music Spark	TPMC	LAC/MSLTP
Participants	N/A	Gary Karen John Tanya Diane	Sarah-Jane Rebecca Agnes Maureen Hannah Janet Barbra Melissa Bernie Paul
Musicians & Programme Managers	Melody Darren Anthony Mason	Tracey Holly Tim Samantha Amy Lucy	Julie Adele Lynn Selma Emma Nathan Abbey

Table 2.1- Sample of Participants

York St John University granted ethical approval for this study following a comprehensive review of ethical consent procedures. Prior to commencing data collection, consent forms were distributed to all participants. These forms outlined the research's aims and objectives and the extent of their involvement. Participants were given the opportunity to raise concerns before data collection commenced. To safeguard confidentiality, data transcribed from focus groups, interviews, and participatory observations were anonymised using pseudonyms (All names in this article are

pseudonyms). All recordings were securely stored on password-protected devices in compliance with data protection regulations and were later disposed of after analysis.

The aim of using a focus group within this study was to begin exploring the meaning behind these concepts and how they related to participants' and musicians' experiences of the programmes. Several questions were developed as prompts and employed to begin the conversations. However, there was generally flexibility within the focus group structure to ensure participants had the space to explore their ideas. Thematic analysis was used to examine the data in this study with the assistance of NVivo following Braun and Clarke's (2006) coding process. This process included coding segments of the transcript that discussed the underlying meaning of these concepts, the participants' perspectives of these three concepts, the musicians' perspectives on how these concepts linked to the programmes, and their reasons for incorporating these concepts in their practice.

I conducted one-to-one interviews to gain further insight into the emerging themes from the focus groups. These interviews followed a semi-standardised approach, allowing flexibility in accommodating interviewees' responses (Robson, 2011). I recorded and transcribed these interviews, ensuring that any confidential information was removed to maintain anonymity. Thematic analysis of these interviews was carried out using the same coding procedure as the focus group analysis. To ensure accuracy, all transcripts and codes were shared with the musicians and participants throughout the process, enabling them to confirm that their perspectives were accurately represented.

Conceptual Lens of Practice:

To develop the conceptual lens of practice, I undertook a critical discourse analysis following Fairclough's (2001) three-stage framework (see Figure 2.1). This process begins at the textual level, where the researcher identifies where the key terms or phrases are being used in the text. Once these are identified at the discursive level, the research considers why the author may be using them to reflect specific viewpoints or ideas. Finally, at the social practice level, the researcher considers how

this viewpoint relates to the broader social context that influences the producers' and interpreters' meanings of the language. In doing this, the researcher must consider the historical context and how this has shaped or developed specific practices within the context.

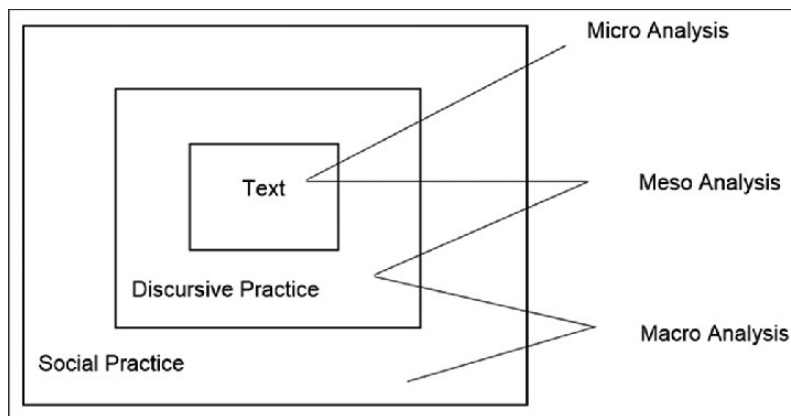


Figure 2.1- Fairclough's (2001) Critical Discourse Analysis Framework

Emerging findings from the critical discourse analysis highlight how the employment of these three concepts within community music discourse has changed and developed. For instance, ownership and empowerment were initially considered in early editions of the journals as critical outcomes of the community musicians' work. John Drummond (1990) in an article for ISME CMA, conceives that community musicians have a responsibility to promote ownership opportunities for participants to elicit a unique and meaningful music-making experience. Drummond conceptualises that this is an integral step to promoting cultural democracy and thereby at the essence of what community musicians aim to achieve through their work. Similarly, Kate Tearle (1993) in a SBJ outlined how supporting incarcerated males to engage in weekly song-writing sessions enabled them to develop a range of creative skills and provide a platform of self-expression that was perceived as empowering. Tearle also presents this notion of community music as an empowering experience as being a critical component to community musicians' practices and outcomes of the work.

While ownership and empowerment were the dominant concepts in the early editions of these journals, the idea of transformation was less prominent. The term was rarely used, even though the discussion often revolved around ideas of social change which could be considered to fit more broadly under the frameworks of social transformation. For instance, 'More Music in Morecambe' (Sound Sense, 1994) in SBJ described how community music-making projects aimed to unite disparate communities through collaborative music-making, thereby fostering social cohesion.

However, the lack of employment of the concept of transformation would change rapidly in the new millennium as from 2000 onwards the concept appeared to gain much more prominence. The likes of Kathryn Deane (2003), for instance, described in a SBJ how music-making could act as a catalyst for supporting children and young people to develop a range of personal skills, including increased self-confidence and self-esteem, that were deemed transformational and personally life-changing.

Similarly, in an article in the IJCM Eric Shieh (2009) highlights how engaging in music-making enabled incarcerated adults to change their perceptions of themselves. Shieh draws on Paulo Freire's ideas of critical pedagogy and how co-constructing knowledge can enable a sense of liberation that can effectively change someone's perception of themselves.

This idea that community music could offer life-changing impacts for participants, particularly those from marginalised communities or within challenging circumstances, became a vital part of the discourse surrounding the impact and value of community music-making. Where ownership and empowerment had originally been considered worthwhile outcomes of engaging music-making, these were now being positioned as tools for supporting transformations to manifest and, therefore, no longer as valued on their own merits.

Conceptual Lens of Policy:

The conceptual lens of policy undertook an extensive literature review on cultural policymaking in the UK to develop a historiography. By establishing this historical analysis, I aimed to link shifts in the

changing employment of these three concepts in line with changes in cultural policymaking. I used Fairclough's (2001) comparison of the interplay between discourse and policy as the basis for uniting these two perspectives.

The historiography locates cultural policymaking in the UK as emerging during World War Two. To relieve the effects of living through the war, funding was disseminated by the Conservative government to the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) to deliver arts and cultural activity in different communities across the nation. Although such activity could be considered the first emergence of community arts activity, there were some differences in this model of practice; predominantly, it could be deemed as being funder-led with more of an emphasis on disseminating access points for cultural engagement rather than working in a grassroots approach that is an embedded feature of community arts practice (Jeffers & Moriarty 2018). Nevertheless, such programmes were successful and remained in operation throughout the war until the war's end; when facing significant financial challenges, the activity was cut, and the CEMA was redeveloped into the Arts Council of Great Britain.

These initial moments marked some of the closest connections between community arts and cultural policymaking. Despite several cultural policy efforts, such as the 1964 Labour Party's Manifesto for accessible arts and culture, which aimed to enhance arts and cultural engagement opportunities, the Arts Council and cultural policymakers often overlooked community arts as an unworthy art form and did not provide funding. Nonetheless, the community arts sector persisted in finding ways to continue to operate using their work as a mechanism for challenging these institutionalised structures (Jeffers & Moriarty 2018; Hope, 2018).

This separation between community arts and cultural policymaking was further advanced through Thatcher's introduction of neoliberalism into the UK economy, which demanded that any form of public subsidy needed a return on investment. This is something that the field of community arts could never achieve as their work was often delivered free of charge to promote access. Thus, as

neoliberalism took hold, the field of community arts found itself further separated from the systems. However, this separation changed in the late 1990s when New Labour, led by Tony Blair, came to power. New Labour had promised a total change to the social welfare system, aiming to promote more equitable opportunities across society. Achieving this would be highly challenging given the UK's financial state; therefore, New Labour had to find cheaper alternative ways of doing this.

As part of their cultural policymaking, New Labour developed the policy Action Ten team and reviewed the role that arts and culture could play in society. The team's report highlighted the untapped potential of arts and culture and how they could play a vital role across several areas, including promoting personal growth and skill development, employment opportunities, community development, and economic income (Belfiore 2012). Recognising that the arts and culture sector has potential for social impacts that connected with many of their new social welfare agendas, New Labour began attaching arts and culture across many of their different social policy agendas, giving arts and culture a new form of instrumentalised value in a way that had not been seen before, while tasking artists and arts organisations with a new mission to deliver activity that could support the manifestation of these impacts (Belfiore, 2012; Gray, 2017).

Community music was in a prime position to support New Labour's social inclusion agenda, primarily because many musicians were already working with communities experiencing marginalisation or challenging circumstances, which were, for all intents and purposes, key demographics of the social inclusion policy. With the availability of increased funding, all community musicians had to do was reframe their work within this new social impact agenda. However, this alteration would come at a cost. According to Hope (2018) and Matarasso (2019), the changed needed led community artists to modify their approach, shifting from grassroots community-based work to collaborating closely with funders to design and implement programmes with predetermined outcomes and impacts that artists were expected to achieve. The work lost the community led nature and this caused considerable tension with some of the core values and practices of the field, particularly regarding cultural democracy, where the emphasis has always been on supporting communities to take the lead in

developing and shaping their own forms of arts and culture. This new way of working appeared to epitomise a framework of democratisation and is considered by Hope (2018) to lead programmes of activity to become more framed as socially engaged arts practice, art commissioned to generate social impact for specific demographics or communities identified by funders and policymakers as requiring intervention, rather than community arts.

It is within these frameworks of focusing on social impact that the ‘transformational’ nature of community arts, and arts and culture more broadly, become dominant rhetoric’s. As Belfiore (2012) writes this idea that arts could offer life-changing impacts that are deemed as transformational was a good story for demonstrating value for money under New Labour’s cultural policymaking agendas. Although New Labour lost power in 2010, the emphasis and focus on social impact agendas have remained prominent within cultural policymaking agendas, even under the conservative government. Policy papers such as the cultural white paper (DCMS 2016) express how arts and culture can potentially transform lives. Similarly, the Arts Council (2020) 'Let's Create Agenda' expresses how arts and culture could be a beacon of empowerment for communities. Given this emphasis on the instrumentalised agendas, community arts and music programmes remain a focal point for delivering activities that aim to promote social impacts identified by funders and policymakers as needing to emerge.

Through examining this cultural policy historiography, we can begin to understand why there is an apparent shift in the employment of the transformation rhetoric within community music discourse. Community musicians, in a bid to demonstrate the value of their work, have had to begin talking about the life-changing nature of their work for individuals and communities to obtain the public subsidy required to deliver their work and sustain their careers.

Conceptual Lens of Language:

My conceptual lens of language aimed to explore the meaning behind these three concepts by exploring fundamental theories connected with each. I undertook an interdisciplinary literature review of the three concepts to achieve this. A summary of the key findings is below:

The concept of **ownership** is intricately linked with the notion of control. It grants individuals the authority to make pivotal decision and to use their property or idea without the concern of interference from others. This control can stem from the possession of physical property, but equally important is the recognition and acceptance of one's beliefs and perspectives by others. This societal validation, as highlighted by Cohen (1978) and Russell (2016), is a key aspect of ownership that fosters a sense of control and empowerment.

Empowerment is closely linked to skill enhancement and individuals taking charge of setting and achieving their goals. These goals can be personal or geared towards changing the wider society. The ability to instigate change hinges on individuals feeling empowered, which can be facilitated through support from community development initiatives and social workers or by connecting with like-minded individuals who share similar perspectives or experiences (Cattaneo & Chapman, 2010).

The concept of **transformation** is crucial for explaining how individuals perceive themselves and are perceived by society. The support or hindrance of others' perceptions can significantly impact an individual's ability to change. By cultivating a support network of like-minded individuals, individuals are more likely to feel empowered to change how they see themselves (Paul, 2014). Social transformation allows oppressed individuals and groups to participate in society actively, ensuring their voices are heard and their identities are recognized (Castles, 2014).

Exploring these concepts individually reveals their synergy in providing a liberating experience that aligns with Freire's ([1969] 2011) concept of critical pedagogy (see Figure 3.1). For example, Freire emphasises individuals' ability to make critical decisions regarding the skills or actions necessary to

challenge social injustice. By addressing these injustices, communities can catalyse social transformation, fostering empowerment and a sense of ownership in the process.

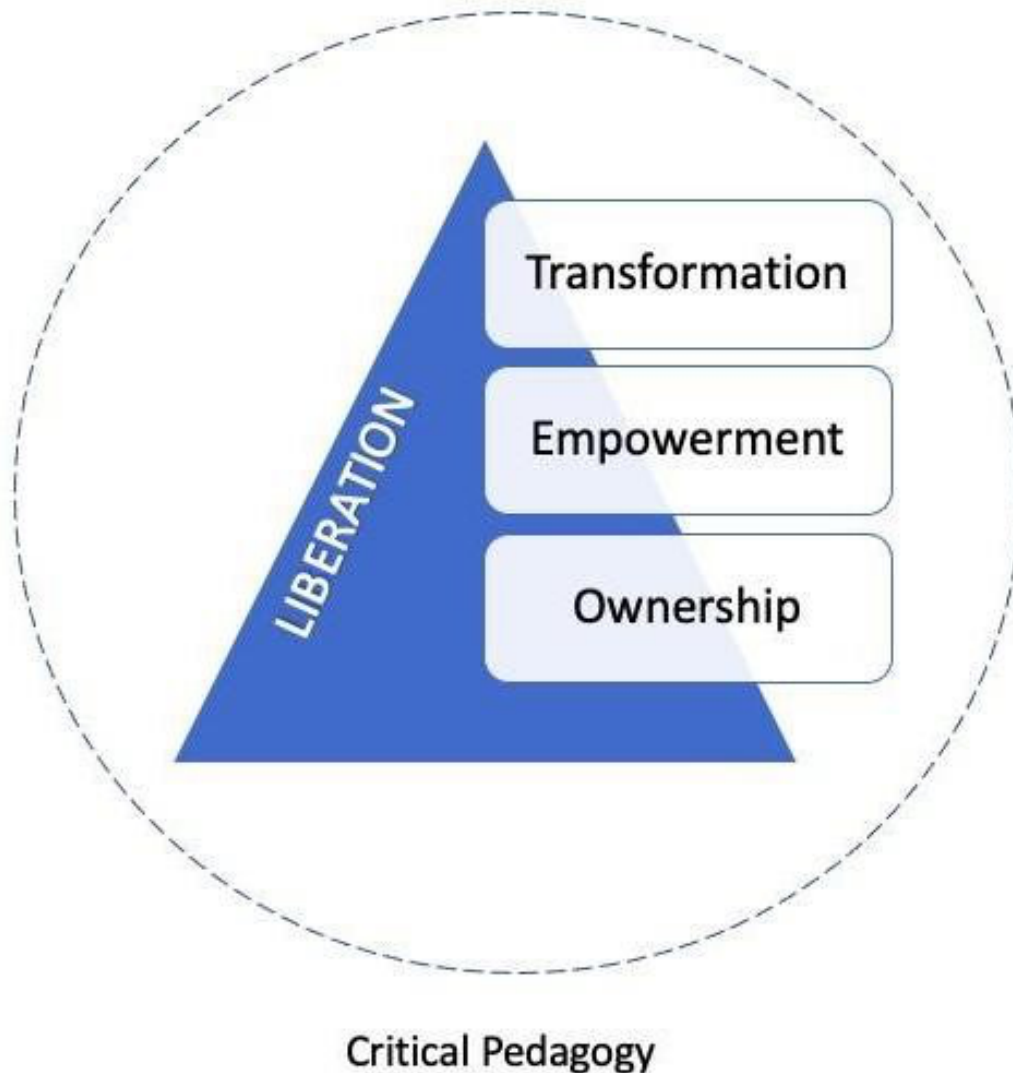


Figure 3.1- Theoretical Lens of Ownership, Empowerment and Transformation

Community musicians are often drawn to Freire's ([1969] 2011) concept of critical pedagogy to conceptualise and understand their work as a vehicle for transformation. Freire's concept of critical pedagogy is built on the grounds of empowering communities to feel capable of challenging and overcoming the unfair structures in society in a bid to achieve social transformation. This resonates with traditional conceptualisations of community arts practice where arts would see their work as a

way of aiding social change (Jeffers & Moriarty 2018). Within the realms of community music, Alicia De Bañffy-Hall (2019) employs Freire's critical pedagogical lens to understand how community music practice works to foster an empowering and transformational experience for participants through its emphasis on agency, skill development, and expression. These three elements as seen to synergise to support social change through challenging preconceived and embedded social injustices.

Case Study Findings:

Findings from the three case studies provided a lens across the following areas

- Community musicians' perspectives on these three concepts of employment in community music discourse,
- the relationship between community musicians and funders, and
- Participants' perspectives of these three concepts.

Community musician's perspective of these three concepts

The musicians across the three case studies recognised how these concepts related to their work, particularly the notion of ownership. They described ownership as an integral part of their practice that emerged from enabling participants to take the lead in making critical decisions on the sorts of music they made and the activities they engaged in within the sessions. Through making these decisions, the musicians believed that the participants felt a sense of control. This idea of ownership and control being connected with one another resonates with the Cohen (1978) and Russel's (2018) theoretical conceptions of ownership where they deem that for someone to feel a sense of ownership over a product or idea, they need to be able to have full control without the concerns of interference from others.

Within community music, Gibson (2020) writes how an integral part of the music-making process is enabling communities to foster a sense of ownership through making critical decisions in the process. This enables individuals to feel as though they have contributed and therefore to have a sense of control and ownership. Crummy (2018) agrees with Gibson writing that it is the sense of ownership within community arts and music programmes that is unique to the practice and that develops through individuals being able to share and contribute their ideas to the process. For Crummy this is an integral step towards achieving cultural democracy which is built on the grounds of individuals making critical decisions on the sorts of arts and culture they would like to make and engage with and is a way of differentiating community arts from other forms of practice.

Empowerment's meaning was believed to be connected to supporting individuals in developing musical and personal skills through the process. Given the range of social impacts the programmes intended to meet, the musicians focused on supporting participants in developing personal skills, such as the ability to express oneself, work with others, and leadership. Through developing a sense of leadership, musicians perceived that individuals would likely feel a sense of autonomy and control, which would boost their sense of power. Cattaneo and Chapman (2010), within their empowerment model, describe how an integral step in supporting an empowering process is enabling individuals to set their own goals they would like to achieve to feel a sense of autonomy and control in the process and then put in place measures to enable them to work towards their goal, be that in developing specific skills or taking specific action.

Similar perspectives are also offered within community music studies on how engaging in music-making may offer a personally empowering process built on autonomy, control and goal setting. Mullen's (2014) work on the Youth Music mentoring programme, which works with young people aged between 12 and 25, highlights the critical role that goal setting had for young people in facilitating an empowering process. At the beginning of working together, Mullen supported young people in deciding on the musical skills they would like to develop through the project and the process

they would take towards achieving these goals. Once the young people had chosen these goals, Mullen ensured they had the control and autonomy to decide on the best process to take to achieve them. By enabling the young people to make decisions, Mullen believed that the process became student-centred and enabled the young people to feel a sense of motivation and empowerment to achieve their goals and develop their personal and musical skills.

Transformation was primarily concerned with personal changes that could be developed through music-making, particularly regarding how participants perceived themselves. Although notions of social transformation were alluded to in terms of using music-making to alter broader perspectives or pre-conceived stigmas of groups, this was viewed as secondary. Paul's (2014) concept of personal transformation is based on the idea of individuals altering their perceptions of themselves and what they believe they can achieve. One way that they deem individuals may go through a personally transformative experience is through engaging in new experiences that facilitates skill development or that provide the opportunity to engage in different perceptions or viewpoints.

This idea that community music may aid personal transformations in individuals' perceptions has become a standard narrative. For instance, Mullen and Deane (2018) outline how community music may support children facing challenging circumstances in reconsidering their own identity through the music-making process, which is deemed transformational in increasing the children's self-confidence and self-esteem. Similarly, Veblen and Elliot (2000) also conceptualise community music as heralding transformative powers in supporting individuals to alter their self-identity through making music with others.

In comparison to the concept of ownership, musicians described empowerment and transformation as being far more challenging to measure in practice. The subjectivity connected to these two concepts' meanings made it difficult to pinpoint where they were manifesting every week. However, they did perceive that these three concepts worked together, with ownership being at the core of the work, to facilitate the transformational outcomes of their work. While ownership was an essential aspect of the

musician's work, the three case studies positioned it as just one element contributing to the emergence of empowering and transformative impacts, which were the musician's primary focus. Similar findings emerged within the critical discourse analysis, where ownership became no longer valued on its own merits within the journal articles but only on its ability to facilitate a sense of empowerment and transformation. Such findings resonate with Belfiore's (2011) argument that transformation has gained prominence in participatory arts due to funders and policymakers emphasising social impact.

Participants' Perspectives of These Three Concepts

Whereas musicians held preconceived ideas of these three concepts for the participants involved in this study, these were identified as relatively new terms, or new in the sense of considering them as being connected to their experiences of engaging in a community music programme. Participants such as Dawn, a foster carer from Loud and Clear, described how she viewed these terms as being 'artsy' and not the terms she believed someone engaging in a programme would use. Instead, she perceived these terms would most likely be used by those delivering the sessions or funding or managing the programme. A perspective shared by other participants.

The distinction that participants made between the language they used, and the language musicians employed has been an increasingly significant topic. For example, Hope (2018) explained how the rise of funder-led programmes in the 1990s altered the grassroots nature of community arts practice. Artists had to conform to funders' interests and language to secure funding. This shift caused tension as artists could no longer use the participants' language and found themselves having to learn a new form of language. Similarly, Turner (2021) underscores the challenges that manifest when community musicians use funder-led language. Turner (2021) writes that using thoughtless language, including 'buzzwords' to attract funding, impedes the objectives of community music programmes as it neglects the community's language and can often lead to communities becoming labelled based on their needs. This experience can result in the practice becoming disempowering for communities as they feel that their voices are not being heard and acknowledged.

When considering how ownership might connect with their experiences of engaging in the programme, participants described similar ideas to the musicians of ownership being primarily concerned with control and decision-making. Karen, Diane and Gary from TPMC, for instance, each outlined how making decisions and contributing to the songs the group created enabled them to see something of themselves and feel a connection to the song. This connection drove this feeling of ownership for the participants and how they associated it with their engaging experiences in the programme.

Empowerment was believed to be a metaphor for describing control and personal development. One participant, Rebecca, 'An Adopted Mother on LAC', articulated how taking charge of important decisions and acquiring new skills contributed to her heightened sense of empowerment. Through making critical decisions and developing new skills, Rebecca felt a shift in her perceptions of herself and her belief in what she could achieve musically. A similar perspective was shared by Karen, a member of TPMC, who discussed how mastering instrumental skills brought her a newfound sense of empowerment, something she had never thought possible before joining the group. Looking back on her progress, Karen acknowledged her empowerment and pride in her developed skills.

This notion of changing or altering one's perspective of oneself also appeared to link to how the participants considered the meaning of transformation. For example, participants such as Gary from TPMC explained how the project brought a profoundly cathartic experience into his life. It empowered him to feel a sense of personal accomplishment by contributing musical ideas or lyrics to the group's songs. This newfound sense of achievement boosted his confidence, and this was critical to altering his mood level and perception of himself

I get a really cathartic sort of experience out of engaging and making something As I said, I'm a creative, I kind of need that. So, I guess that-that it kind of gives me a level of confidence. There's like a knock-on effect that affects a load of things.

(Gary 2021)

Gary found this experience transformative, as it marked the start of his journey to overcome the mental health obstacles he was encountering and was the initial step toward his healing. Similarly, members of LAC and MSLTP programmes shared how the initiative had been transformative in enhancing their relationship and bond with the children under their care. Through engaging in the programme, the parents and carers were developing their knowledge and skills, finding new ways to interact with the children in their care. This was an integral step for beginning to form bonds as the parents and carers found that they felt empowered enough through attending the programme to know begin using music-making activities at home with the child.

Although the musicians had perceived that their work could facilitate social transformations, none of the participants acknowledged social transformation as being something they recognised in connection to their experiences of engaging in the programme. Instead, the focus was solely on the personal transformations. Participants' recognition of the concept of transformation to describe personal impacts or changes further demonstrates how this rhetoric employed by funders and policymakers that arts and culture can foster personal impacts has become embedded in society and critical within the discourse.

The relationship between community musicians and funders

One of the primary reasons musicians employed the concepts of empowerment and transformation was the influence they felt from their funder. Scholars such as Deane (2018), Hope (2018), and Currie (2021) have also highlighted the idea that funders and policymakers may have an influential role in the language and practices of community musicians. Currie (2021), for instance, notes how community musicians have become accustomed to employing a 'chameleonic practice' (p.79), thereby altering their practices, scope of projects and associated language to ensure their work resonates with

the changing policy shifts. Doing so can result in further funding and ensure they highlight the value of their work in a way that resonates with policymakers and funders.

Through this study, it became apparent how community musicians are employing this chameleonic practice in action. For instance, in Music Spark and L&C, musicians adjusted their language and programme delivery to match the expectations of their funder, Youth Music. This meant employing terms such as empowerment and transformation, even if they were not the terms, they would have chosen themselves. Mason from Music Spark, for example, used terms like 'empowerment' and 'transformation' when communicating with funders, believing that the funder highly valued these concepts over other terms such as ownership.

In Music Spark, the managers created weekly reflective logs for the musicians to complete, evaluating the weekly sessions. These logs, designed to align with the agreed-upon outcomes of each programme, played a crucial role in shaping the language musicians used to describe their work. Melody, a musician from Music Spark, explained in her interview how the reflective diaries asked her to employ specific concepts to describe her work, even if they were not concepts, she would have naturally chosen to use.

Oh, I mean, the words are already there to prompt us. They're not necessarily used consciously, and I don't think it becomes very, you know, theory based whilst we're leading erm, unless we're actually focusing on what we're doing. So, if it's an exercise about this, then we would use those words [...] They are in the questions. So, a lot of the questions are like that. Do you see confidence building? Stuff like that

(Melody, 2020)

Similar perspectives were shared in L&C, where Julie - one of the musicians, described how she felt influenced to use terms like empowerment and transformation when communicating with Youth

Music because they felt 'meaty' and, therefore, would demonstrate and tell the story of the work in a way that resonated with what Youth Music expected.

Evaluation methods like these, which are used to showcase impacts in specific ways, align with Belfiore and Bennett's (2007) argument about the influence of New Labour's evidence-based policymaking in the arts and culture sector. While New Labour significantly increased funding for arts and cultural activities, it also introduced neoliberal managerial techniques that emphasised the need for solid evidence to prove value for money that has remained in place today. As a result, many funders across the U.K. require organisations to demonstrate the impact of their work. Music Spark and L&C had specific social outcomes associated with their work, which Youth Music aimed to achieve through the programme. This meant musicians had to find ways to gather 'evidence' demonstrating how the project worked towards these aims. Altering their language to demonstrate these empowering and transformational outcomes, or reflecting on them in their evaluation methods was one approach to demonstrating the programmes achievement of its aims.

Hope (2018) discusses the significant influence of funders on the language and practices of community artists and musicians. She examines how the presence of funders has affected the discourse of community art and consequently shaped how practitioners perceive and communicate the impact of their work. In some cases, Hope highlights how programmes of activity could even be changed to meet the needs of funders or to try and achieve specific outcomes that artists perceived funders were interested in seeing. This could also be observed in these three case studies as musicians from all three programmes explained how they had incorporated new activities, such as performance opportunities and accreditation, at their funder's request rather than the participants' request. In the case of L&C, this influence of funders had recently led them to begin to try and work with refugees and asylum seekers, who were now a key demographic. In setting up this work, managers for L&C had to decrease some of their work with families outside of this demographic to ensure they had enough funding. This adaptation demonstrates the real-world influence of funders on the work of community musicians.

Changing programmes to meet the needs of funders without collaborating with participants causes tension with the traditional values and narratives of community arts (Jeffers & Moriarty, 2018). Initially, these values revolved around opposing institutionalised forms of arts and cultural activities that were not developed with and by the communities. Now, however, it appears that funded community music programmes are neglecting these values and instead removing the grassroots nature of such practices. Programmes have become tied to delivering activities for communities that funders and policymakers identify as needing arts and cultural intervention, with transformational social impact outcomes and agendas attached (Gibson, 2020). Rather than supporting cultural democracy, these programmes align and promote cultural democratisation, which Evrad (1997) describes as

aim[ing] to disseminate major cultural works to an audience that does not have ready access to them, for lack of financial means or knowledge derived from education

(Evrad 1997, p.167-168)

In the late 1980s, the democratisation of culture became a key focus of European cultural policies (Evrad, 1997; Hope, 2018). Hope and Evrad highlighted that the growing emphasis on this concept was rooted in using arts and cultural activities to promote cultural equality and generate social impacts for groups with limited opportunities.

While promoting cultural equity may seem beneficial in theory, it can unintentionally further marginalise the cultural heritage of different communities. Instead of supporting communities in creating, participating in, and celebrating their unique arts and culture, funding and policy decisions often prioritise forms of arts and culture considered important by funders and policymakers. Traditional community music practices, which has historically sought to promote marginalised art forms, appear to have been impacted by the emergence of funded practice models. As a result, community musicians have had to adapt their practices and language to align with funders' preferences rather than their communities' needs. This has resulted in community arts removing itself from its activist nature and becoming an institutionalised form of practice. The demonstration of this

is clear through these case studies in how musicians are adapting their language, practices, and scopes of programmes to align with funders.

Conclusions

In conclusion, I revisit the initial question set out at the beginning of the paper: *Has community music gotten into the 'bed with the devil' by working within the frameworks of cultural policymaking?* This study's findings illuminate the influence of funders and policymakers on community music discourse (language and practice) over the past few decades. For instance, we can see how community musicians have adapted their programme development, delivery, and evaluation to align with the values imposed by funders and policymakers in the arts and culture sector. Furthermore, we have observed community music programmes promoting various social policy agendas, many of which aim to bring about transformational and life-changing impacts for individuals identified by funders and policymakers as marginalised or at risk of marginalisation.

Scholars such as Belfiore (2023) have expressed concerns about using community music and participatory arts to further governmental agendas. They question whether these initiatives offer only temporary solutions to social issues and are being used by governments to address problems as a cheaper, alternative fix given the discourse that has developed regarding the socially impactful nature of the work. Given the increasing presence of community music programmes in health and social welfare contexts, it does seem plausible that these concerns are justified. Such programmes are potentially being used as cheaper, short-term fixes rather than trying to fix the initial systemic problems. On the face of it, many community music programmes are substituting the services governments have cut back on due to austerity measures. For example, programmes working with individuals facing mental health challenges may serve as a substitute for professional services, which have long waiting times. Similarly, programmes working with children in care address the gaps created by significant funding and restructuring of social services through austerity measures. Both areas have been heavily hit by the withdrawal of funding and are practically on their knees. By being

willing to deliver music programmes for funders and policymakers in these areas, community musicians are ultimately plastering the gap left by governmental decisions and cost-cutting, overcoming or trying to 'prop' up services through their work.

While community musicians and artists may find it convenient to play the role of a 'sticking plaster' and obtain the associated funding, such practices pose distinct challenges to the activist nature of their work and their commitment to cultural democracy. It positions them at risk of epitomising the very thing they were once against- the funder-led model of arts and cultural activity that fails to account for the creative desires of communities and promotes the democratisation of culture as a more appropriate means to arts and cultural engagement. If community music is a field that wants to continue promoting cultural democracy, it needs to resist this role and reclaim its activist nature. This is not an easy task, but it is a necessary one. By reclaiming their activism, community musicians can ensure that their work truly serves the needs and desires of the communities they work with.

Musicians and artists should acknowledge the impact of cultural policy on their work. Despite the perception that their work operates independently of cultural policymaking (Currie, 2021), this is not the case. By paying closer attention to how cultural policy shapes the work of community musicians, they can better understand where their practices and values may not align with funders and policymakers. This awareness can empower them to make thoughtful decisions about embracing or resisting these frameworks or advocating for change. If community musicians aim to uphold cultural democracy as a fundamental part of society, change is essential. However, they must first disentangle themselves from being in bed with the devil to achieve this.

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